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The Call of the War to the Clergy.

THE REV. C. J. PROCTER

THE REV. CANON JOYNT

THE VEN. ARCHDEACON GRESFORD JONES

THE REV. J. GOUGH McCORMICK

THE BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

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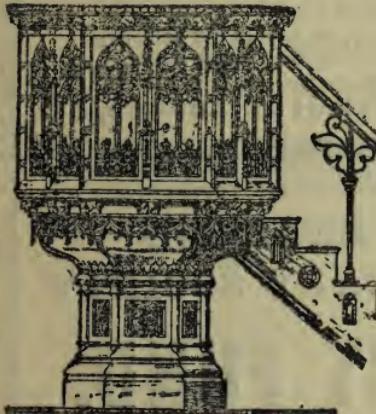
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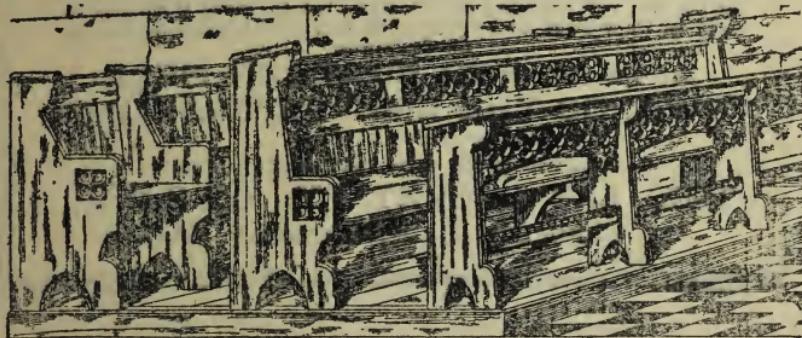
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The Call of the War to the Clergy.

ISLINGTON CLERICAL MEETING.

ISLINGTON PARISH CHURCH.

JANUARY 11, 1916.

THE OPENING ADDRESS.

By

THE REV. C. J. PROCTER, M.A.

Vicar and Rural Dean of Islington.

My Brethren,—We are met together for this eighty-ninth Islington Clerical Meeting at a time of unparalleled crisis, when the fate of Empires is trembling in the balance, when the map of the world is being reconstructed, and, humanly speaking, the future of our nation determined for generations to come. It is at such a time we are seeking to inquire what special message is the booming note of this dread war bringing to us clergy? When all sections of the community, from highest to lowest, from richest to poorest, are all making such a magnificent response to the call of the nation's need, we may fittingly and profitably ask, What can be our best contribution to our country's cause? How can we most effectively help on our nation's victory?

Though for reasons which it would be beside our

purpose to discuss at the moment, the clergy of military age have been dissuaded by those in authority from themselves becoming actual combatants in the fight, I think we may, with pardonable pride, remind ourselves what a magnificent contribution the families of the clergy have made to the national cause.

There is many a clergyman to-day who is bravely bearing a bitter sorrow in his heart, keeping a bright face, for others have to be comforted, but whose hair is a bit greyer and his shoulders a little bent as he goes about his parish, for a short while ago the blinds of the vicarage were down, and never again will he hear the familiar footsteps and ringing voice of the bright lad who was the pride and joy of his life. That son went forth a few months ago at the cost of great sacrifice, when home ties, worldly interests, and personal inclination were all pulling in the other direction, but he had heard the call, he had caught the vision, he had learned the hidden meaning of Calvary, and he laid down his life for his friends.

These homes of the clergy have for generations been making a fine contribution to the nation's progress in almost every branch of industry and investigation, and the great purpose of our meeting together to-day is to consider how, in this day of distress, and anguish, and agony, we, as clergy, can best forward the interests of the Empire to which we are proud to belong. We would by no means belittle our proud inheritance. This Empire of ours, built up under the blessing of God by the devotion and bravery of our forefathers, is a sacred charge entrusted to us, and we have our contribution to make, in preserving it intact and glorious, and in seeking to fulfil God's purpose concerning us and realise our destiny.

In the invitation which called us together for this meeting it was intimated that the great purpose of the day would be to seek to impress upon each one a conscious sense of responsibility, coupled with a

vision of possibility. If we really believe, as no doubt we do, that moral greatness is the true foundation of national greatness, then surely, as men who have a great and solemn charge entrusted to them for the spiritual welfare of the people, it behoves us to look to ourselves first of all, that we may be faithful to our commission, and brave and true in the discharge of our duty. The rise and fall of peoples and Empires always have been determined, sooner or later, by moral and religious causes. The leading article of a London daily newspaper the other day commenced with this striking assertion: "We have already expressed the view that it is not by cannon, or even by cash alone, that wars are successfully waged in these days. Those material agents need to be reinforced by a spiritual agency."

It is written on every page of universal history that nothing can save a nation from decay and festering corruption if its morals are corrupt and its religious faith has become an impotent force—a fire without heat. There are ever threatening the best life of any community mighty battalions of destruction more to be dreaded than many millions of armed enemies. Selfishness, impurity, vice, inordinate love of the world, its possessions and pleasures—these are the secret, subtle foes most to be dreaded by those who love their country most.

Brethren, there rests upon us, at this time of crisis and anxiety, a most solemn responsibility of spiritual leadership. Our men in the trenches are, in thousands of cases, thank God, undergoing the deepest spiritual experiences, they are finding their souls, they are realising the higher values of things that really matter, they are looking into the very face of their Saviour.

It will indeed be a miserable thing if, as soon as they come back home, the vision is dissipated and the ideal lost; it will be grievous indeed if they find the Church at home cold, formal, callous, and our

very thanksgivings for victory drowned in the shrieks of drunken debauchery. Our earnest endeavour, our constant prayer, should be that when these men come back with new inspirations and purposes they may find a Church responsive and sympathetic, having shaken off the lethargy of formality and conventionality, and ablaze with the fire of consecrated devotion.

And the work of preparation and renovation in the Church must begin with ourselves; the spiritual army of God's Church requires good officers and leadership, just as our material army does. If we would see our people at home showing themselves worthy of the magnificent sacrifices made on their behalf by our brave soldiers and sailors, who are giving up their very life in the sacred cause of duty, then I say we must ourselves be leaders in this upward life.

There is need on the part of us clergy of more intense effort, of more unwearied devotion in all spiritual activity and faithfulness than ever before. Woe to the nation whose ministers and stewards of the Divine mysteries are not found faithful! If we are to be ready for the National Mission of which we hear, the work of regenerating Grace must first of all have begun among the clergy themselves.

A quotation from the New Year's Message of the Bishop of Manchester to the clergy of his diocese may well serve as a motto for our day's thought: "A clergy moved to deep repentance will not fail to reach the hearts of the nation. If we do not repent, we shall not move others to repentance."

My brothers, we must ever seek to vindicate our belief in the spiritual by the spirituality of our life, and through simplicity of habit, consistency of conduct, and fervour of spirit we must demonstrate to the world that we hold lightly on things of the world; our citizenship is in Heaven.

A modern writer has truly said of a zealous but unsanctified ministry, "Men admire, but do not revere; they appreciate, but do not repent; they are interested, but not exalted; they say, What a fine sermon, but not, What a great God!"

I am convinced that when the war is over there will be a great danger of spiritual reaction. We may not witness the delirious "Maffiking" of the Boer War. There will be too many sad hearts mourning the loss of dear ones for that, but we may see a recrudescence of materialism and worldliness, and there will be intense need for all spiritual leaders to manifest all their resources of faith and devotion, to quit themselves like men, to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. We cannot all serve our King in the material fight which is being waged to-day against his enemies, but we can all valiantly serve the King of Kings in the great spiritual fight.

At this time of war we fittingly appeal to the soldier spirit which, I suppose, lies hidden in the heart even of the most profound pacifist. In the popular report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which is entitled "The Book and the Sword," I read, "The soldierly spirit is just that elemental quality in man which our Lord demands in everyone who would be His disciple. He stands over every human soul, expecting, welcoming, and blessing just the quality which we see in the recruit—the ready sacrifice, the detachment, the enlistment in a cause which demands his all, the self-training, the courage, the unsparing discipline, the determination to do and die. Yes, it takes a good soldier to make a good Christian."

May God, in His mercy, grant to each one of us, as the outcome of to-day's message, more of this ready sacrifice, this detachment from the world, this unflinching courage, this unsparing discipline, that men may know and see for themselves that we have been with Jesus and the love of Christ constraineth us.

THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS—I.

By

THE REV. CANON JOYNT, M.A.

Vicar of Christ Church, Gipsy Hill, S.E.

A review of a great Judge's life in a daily paper said recently that "he was not, as so many eminent lawyers, the son of a clergyman, but of something better." This observation would, perhaps, feel more at home in the pages of Fielding or Thackeray than now when the vicarage is confessedly recruiting so abundantly the nobler employments of human life, and the sons of even the humblest parsonages are in extraordinary numbers paying the supreme sacrifice of patriotism on the war-stricken fields.

But we are here neither to bury Cæsar nor to praise him, but to restate as best we may what manner of man the commissioned servants of the Church of England may be, and ought to be, especially in days which are, in every walk of life, separating "the precious from the vile."

The Ordination of Shepherds.

The Church herself, in what a wooden-jointed phrase calls her formularies, makes it clear that it is primarily to be shepherds of Christ's flock that she calls her ministers. There are many indications of this.

The pastoral, rather than the sacerdotal, note is

dominant, for example, in the Gospels read in the Ordering of Priests. In one of these attention is riveted on the sheep, tired, helpless, and cast down, or scattered unshepherded on the barren slopes. In the other stands (central and altogether lovely) the Figure of the Good Shepherd Himself; all the more august and love-compelling by being placed in contrast with that false and forbidding being whom our Lord scorches with the damning brand "hireling." I have in my possession a little picture of only small intrinsic value, but of deep and suggestive power. A shepherd stands in the foreground and a flock of sheep is passing before him. He wears an expression of combined strength, love, tenderness, satisfaction, and anxiety. He is evidently counting the sheep as they move towards the fold in the evening. The simple title is "The Shepherd." Who he is, or where, I know not, but he is a succourer and inspirer, as many humble good men are among you, though you may know it not. The Good Shepherd must not be only named with capital letters. The portrait in St. John is chiefly, of course, that of the unique One, the One Who, with eternal atoning efficacy, "came by with wounded side, and for the sheep the Shepherd died." None the less a *good* shepherd is always still giving his life for the sheep, and not merely in the few agonising moments of physical dissolution. Day after day, in a service made noble by sacrifice and delightful by love, he counts not his life dear unto himself, loving not the fleece but the flock, seeking not the preferment of high place nor the approving pen of the Editor, whose flagging phrases of praise the hireling longs to quicken.

Great would be our gain if we resolved this morning to read on our knees, at least once in each month, these two Gospels of our priesthood. They would melt the icy coating of conventionality and perfunctoriness which sometimes, under the name of "clerical duty,"

seeks to pass for the shepherding of souls, while it is little more than the gibbering ghost of our first loving enthusiasm for the welfare of the flock which the Great Shepherd purchased with His Blood.

I came to the Throne with a trembling heart,
 The old year was done,
 " Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me,
 For I have spoilt this one " ;
 And instead of that leaf so stained and blotted,
 He gave me a new leaf all unspotted,
 And into my sad heart smiled,
 And said, " Do better now, my child. "

A Pastoral Definition.

A shepherd is defined as a man who tends, feeds, and protects the sheep committed to his care. Such, too, is the shepherd of souls. If he is not quite what Milton's angels were :

Flaming ministers to watch and tend
 Their earthly charge,

yet he will be, if not a "flaming minister," at least a faithful guardian who cares with a care that really gives its life for the sheep. Such shepherds are made (not born) by drinking deep and constantly of the spirit and sacrifice of the Chief Shepherd. Loving Him devotedly, and not merely theologically, they will share His travail of soul, and yearn to bring to Him that which was lost and recover for Him that fair demesne down-trodden by the ruthless hoof of sin. They have a passionate passion for souls.

With them heaven, hell, death, judgment, are great realities, and not merely themes for the academic groves where subtle theologians take their walks and talk. The good shepherd knows that his ministry is a wheel, however small, in God's great mechanism of redemption, which must do its own full part if all is not to be thrown out of gear. He remembers that

the day of fire shall declare his work, of what sort it is, for the flock which is not his, but Another's. He has been converted not only from sins of the graver kind, but from love of ease, from self-seeking, from "the unhappy desire of being great," and even (may I be forgiven if I wound !) from the gabbling profanity of galloping mattins. For "*sancta sanctus sancte trahit.*" Alike in the squalid court and the mansion, in the pulpit or at the Table of Communion, by the bedside, where the beating of death's wing is drawing audibly nearer, and at the grave-head, in the intercourse of the social circle, and behind the closed door of the prayer-room, he will be always and legibly, though unobtrusively, stamped with the imprint of heaven, with the marks of one who is, under all conditions, seeking Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and is resolved "to feed and provide for the Lord's family." And yet, if we are to say full truth, "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed"—far, far too often. To prepare the food for the flock is here declared to be our plain duty, and to so prepare and present it that they will not "loathe this light bread," or, too often, heavy bread. (Well is it for me and you that the sublime task of preaching is to be handled to-day by other hands than mine.) "Feed them," says St. Bernard, "with the Word; with the life; with the fruit of consecrated speech." "A holy simplicity is mightier than unsanctified eloquence," says St. Jerome. "Your life speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say," says another. "Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway," is Goldsmith's homage for the holy preacher. Feed them with the Divine Life. Feed them, too, with your own life. For which of us does not thankfully know that the lives of certain good men are nourishment to our own? The Royal Academician is admitted to be one of the forty not for his skill in describing the work of other artists, but for the beauty

and glory of what he has himself wrought for the temple of art. "I do" and "I am" will always carry vastly more weight than "I say."

Who Are the Flock?

It is time to ask, Who are the flock? The little companies of the faithful who love the habitation of God's house and ask the way to Zion? Not so, says the Mother Church of England, who would spread her great loving wing as a brooding bird over not only the one in the safe shelter, but over the ninety and nine who forsake her assemblies. Else did she but faithlessly represent Him who came not to call the righteous, but the sinful; not to fondle that which is found, but to seek and to save that which was lost. Poor indeed must be his pastorate who does not often gaze with a wistful eye along the devious ways by which the lambs, once folded in the Church's arms in Baptism, have strayed from the fold to be merged, alas! alas! in the "other sheep" which are not of His flock Who sent us to shepherd their souls. Love cannot be inactive or be governed by indolence in dealing with the loved. How can a true shepherd's love ever become poisoned by ambition, self-flattery, or place-seeking? Sincerity, sacrifice, and self-effacement are rarely at a discount, and they stand high in even the world's table of values to-day. But these are guiltily missing in him who, content with having "a good congregation," goes not forth into the world's highway to bring in the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind. The Church of England has not a multitude of religiously disposed groups for her care, but the entire people of England. "All souls are mine to tend for the great Shepherd," should be inscribed on her banners.

Remember that the pastorate we have for our ideal will be no weak, nerveless, hysterical thing. It will reprove, rebuke, exhort with not only long-suffering, but

with dignity and authority. He must be a strong as well as a loving man, who will not fill his magazine with the phrases of flattery any more than he will call the religious papers to witness that he had an increase of twelve in his Easter communicants, and that things have greatly improved since his (presumably) incompetent predecessor handed the charge of things to him. (The shepherd who decries the man whom he succeeds ought to be obliged to wear an armlet with the heraldry of conceit inscribed upon it.)

One of our most urgent needs to-day in the Church is the raising up of an order of shepherd-prophets who would "constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake." "He spake as one having authority, and not as the Scribes"—the authority surely in this case not solely that of His eternal Sonship, but of internal sincerity, reality, and consequent conviction. Conviction—that is the word. The condition of being fully convinced that what we say, what we do, what we are, is matter of life and death to the flock. What pastoral power would we wield if we were fully convinced that on the issue of perhaps one visit in a home depended the everlasting happiness or misery of a soul! But convictions to-day are a depressed market. Those anxious to sell cheaply are very numerous; because the German has not quite yet disillusioned us, and we retain a lurking suspicion that to be sure of the truth of the Bible and very obedient to the commands of Christ are a mark of intellectual weakness, and that as the Olympians do not all walk in the old paths, we must not discredit ourselves by substituting "thus saith the Lord" for the peradventures of scholarship.

In the Home.

In the homes of his flock the shepherd will generally be as welcome as he deserves to be. He will not forget, though he will rarely assert it in words, the sacred

relationship in which he stands. Censoriousness, criticism, gossip, tale-bearing, superior or artificial airs, unreality, secularity will be put far from him, together with "Sunday voice," not to speak of downright slackness and self-indulgence. He will go before the sheep, always a little ahead of them, in prayerfulness, simplicity, other-worldliness, even as Beatrice drew Dante forward by his gaze fixed on her as she moves along a higher level than his own. Sympathy of the genuine kind, that which shares joys and sorrows not because it must, but because it cannot help it, is a "best gift to be coveted earnestly." "Send me one of the asses that I may run to the man of God," was the first demand of a mother's broken heart. The shepherd has no lack of *criteria* by which to estimate his value in the eyes of his flock. This is one. Do they run to the man of God in their troubles? When bad news arrives from the War Office, is he the first to be sent for? That story of the Shumammite unconsciously contrasts two pastorates. The one puts the prophet's staff on the dead child's face. Everything is quite properly correct and orthodox and officially in order. The other closes the door upon them twain and prays; then he flung his whole great manhood on the child, his mouth on his mouth, hands on his hands, eyes upon his eyes. This he did again and again, imparting life's warmth to frozen death and giving, so to say, himself for this lamb of God's fold. To read this story and imbibe its spirit is to learn that official authority, and even a pastoral staff, may co-exist with an absolutely powerless pastorate whose incompetence is summed up in one livid sentence, "*The child is not awaked.*" "*There was neither voice nor hearing.*"

Perils and Rewards.

Perils.—The enemy has in his quiver certain shafts labelled "*Ad clerum.*" I can only name one or two.

(1) *Unreality*.—How easy is it to be a purveyor of the Master's goods, achieving a carefully tabulated output of sermons, visits, celebrations, and to be "busy here and there," with a high repute for organising skill and for punctilious attention, and with it all to be a mere sepulchre full of the bones of decayed beliefs from which the heart-beat of love to the Man of Calvary has departed! This explains sometimes the intonation many give to the word "parson." Men must believe in us if we are to do them good, and the average man and woman and child may be very little versed in theology, but they are very well skilled in the assay of the metal of which the Christian shepherd is made. The measure of our genuineness as "messengers of the Church, and the glory of Christ" is what we are in secret prayer, and where no eye but the Allseeing is on us. A false, unreal ministry is the most terrible thing on earth.

(2) *Money-raising*.—This seems the almost incurable disease of the Church's system, and it is a crime against the shepherd and his flock alike, for his deterioration directly affects them—that so large a part of his time, thought, and toil should be demanded by this task, which receives no mention whatsoever in the Commission which admitted him to his ministry. It is shameful that the heavenly ideals of the greatest of human offices should be degraded by the compulsory writing of begging letters or by our having to stand, as mendicants, at the doors of the rich. This kind of work eats the heart out of many of the finer type of the Church's shepherds, lowers and vulgarises their ideals, and disparages them in the eyes of men. The hope that a better day was dawning for the shepherd of the poor with the creation of Boards of Finance has not yet been fully realised, Ossa being in some cases piled upon Pelion by the clergy having to pay a part of the "Due" from their own exiguous resources; while it is frequently felt that the

cold steel fingers of compulsion are not fully hidden by the shining velveteen glove called voluntary.

Forgive a warning finger held up (by one who has been brushing the dust from high aims rather than recording achievement) against the insidious advances of sloth, self-advertisement, a strutting orthodoxy which has no embracing arms or bowels of compassion, and the all too prevalent habit of depreciating our brethren in the ministry, and against the awful loss of a sense of mission, of holding credentials from heaven. This sense is easy to lose. Let us go back to-day like Bunyan's pilgrim, and recover it at any cost. Forgive me, too, if I ask you to deprecate the association of that honourable title, Evangelical Churchman, with slovenliness of spiritual habits, irreverence of attitude, disorderliness in the appointments belonging to the Sacraments, omission to bring habitually and at fixed intervals the Communion to the aged, infirm, and sick with as much reverent care of that holy mystery as we give to it in the Church, failure to stand in the gap by which the young sheep escape from the pasturage of the Church with its entail of Young-life Campaigns to bring again that which need never, in many cases, have been lost. Let us beware of the official stamp being too conspicuous on our machinery. Even an annual letter to communicants may well be supplanted by an occasional message with a more personal note in it. It would come quite untarnished by that order and punctuality which the reputation for regularity and method you have built up leads them to expect. And let us seek our Lord's pardon for that disloyalty to the Church and her children which fails to secure that every lamb of her fold is grounded in and fortified by what Charles Kingsley called the greatest of all barriers against secularism—*the Church Catechism*. As things are the lack of Confirmation candidates is in many cases fully explained by a denial to the children of their

spiritual birthright, to be taught so soon as they are able to learn what a solemn vow, promise, and profession they made in their Baptism.

Rewards.—The rewards of the good shepherd are most often not materially or intrinsically great, but are extremely precious. To be loved, trusted, listened to, needed; to be the confidant from whose ear no secret, bright or dark, is withheld; to move alike amid squalid streets and in the dwelling-places of the great as the friend of all; to have an abundant entrance into the circles of home; and to be listened to as one who speaks with the authority which is born of study of the Word of God and of the human heart, one who knows Him Whom he represents; to be wanted in all their great moments—to be all this, and far more, it may be, without being much heard of in high ecclesiastical circles, not to say in the highest of all. He may be a true shepherd of souls quite consistently with little aptitude for three committees a day or for the many diocesan or other contrivances for drawing him from his proper tasks.

Parochialism is regrettably becoming an extinct crime. "This man is not a good preacher, but he helps me more than anyone I know on earth." This testimony was found in the aisle of a church after being dropped inadvertently by the writer, evidently a man of education, as he left the building. Such a shepherd's name may only rarely appear in newspapers, for he is incapable of sending a paragraph with the breath of plenary inspiration on it about himself or his work.

There is much that the average shepherd cannot be, but he can be humble, accessible, self-forgetful, laborious, tender, strong, and carry the *stigmata* of Christ. Like Mary's gift, his life is a daily breaking of the alabaster box of self and ease, and the odour fills the air in which he walks and makes men think well of his Master if not of him.

THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS—II.

By

THE VEN. H. GRESFORD JONES, M.A.,
Archdeacon of Sheffield.

“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the House of Israel.”—EZEKIEL xxxiii. 7.

Of all the vicissitudes of this terrible war, none will stand out, I believe, with more horror to those who experienced it than the appalling storm that a month ago devastated the Gallipoli Peninsula, and burst nowhere with fiercer malignity than upon the intrepid troops round Suvla Bay. First came the rain: then the frost: then the unspeakable wind. And when they tried to rescue the heroic sufferers, one sentry was found frozen dead at his post: his body erect at his look-out: his blackened face still bent with dulled eye upon the sights of his rifle: “faithful unto death.” And his—that is the undying glory of our soldiers—is but typical of the heroism that the “call of the war” has evoked from thousands.

It is because we are so conscious of the call to similar self-sacrifice upon the Higher Plane, so conscious perhaps some of us of our poor response to it, that we hear it as the deep reverberating note of our assembly to-day. The desire for a National Mission—for a revival or rebirth of all our Church’s energies—is in our leaders’ minds. It will find, I imagine, no

warmer sympathy than that of this Islington Clerical Meeting. Because we are ourselves clergymen, and because we are honest, we know just where and how such renewal must begin.

What haunts the true prophet in every period of defection from God is that it is in himself that the trouble lies; and this still more, that the point at which he fails is in his trust as a shepherd of God's sheep. "Woe is me," he cries, "false pastor that I am!" "Woe be unto the pastors that have not visited my sheep!" "Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!" "Woe to the idle shepherd that leaveth the flock!"

We do right, then, on this day, when we are solemnly met to hear God's call, to begin here where down the ages the prophet's heart has smitten him. We are assuredly laying our finger upon the chief spiritual need of our time. Our pastoral work has lost proportions. The loss of so many sheep from Christ's fold is primarily due to this, that so few really know us, and we so little really know them. "Ninety per cent. of the working men," said one of them to me last week, "suspect the clergy of being against their best interests." The state of so many of the homes show how little the parochial system has fulfilled its task. Administration has eaten out visitation. We are known at committees and at meetings; we are not known in the homes of our people. Where intimacy and affection should be mutual, hardness or ignorance reigns. "Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"

What would good "shepherding" really mean for England?

How can it be inspired?

II.

We are busy studying "Revival." We are trying to see what caused the grand moments of religious

renewal; what may account for those great days "When God came." We rightly turn to the amazing product of John Wesley; of Tauler and the Friends of God; of Ignatius or Francis. Yet there is one age, like our own, cleft with strong antagonisms, yet still, as we want ours to be, so fruitfully constructive of the best of English character, that we may well take it in our survey. One clergyman of the Church of England there is at its heart, so like ourselves in his parochial struggling, so accessible to us through his writings and his story, that we may well take him as our type. The age I mean is that of the Revolution, and the clergyman that to me typifies it is Richard Baxter, Vicar of Kidderminster from 1644 to 1660.

Richard Baxter stands for National Revival through the shepherding of the parish priest.

He is classed by William Wilberforce, in his *Practical View*, "among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England." And, if I may quote one remarkable passage from Fawcett's Preface to Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, I think no Vicar here present will grudge the tribute:

"Before his coming to Kidderminster the place was overrun with ignorance and profaneness; but, by a Divine blessing on his wise and faithful cultivation, the fruits of righteousness sprang up in rich abundance. He at first found but a single instance or two of daily Family Prayer in the whole street, and, at his going away, but one family or two could be found in some streets that continued to neglect it. And on Lord's Days, instead of the open profanation to which they had been so long accustomed, a person in passing through the town in the intervals of public worship might overhear hundreds of families engaged in singing Psalms, or reading the Scriptures and other good books. . . . His care of souls committed to his charge and the success of his labours among them

were truly remarkable: for the number of his stated communicants rose to 600, of whom he himself declared there were not twelve concerning whose sincere piety he had not reason to entertain good hopes."

There, my brethren, is the way in which Revival may again come to our Church! There you may see what good shepherding would mean for this England of ours.

Revival may come in many ways. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." God's appointed way is through such shepherding as that of Richard Baxter. Does that parish of Kidderminster, with its "open profanation," to which people had become "long accustomed," in any way suggest to us our own parish? Then let its transformation suggest to us our own way of remedy. Family prayers: Sunday observance: the deepening of the communicant's life: such, apparently, were Baxter's methods. Each, I respectfully submit, is peculiarly needed, is hopefully possible in our own spheres. Each and all of them could only have been achieved by devoted laborious pastoral zeal. And it is just this to which God, for our nation's sake, is now recalling us. Too much we have given to headquarters' claims; too little to the needs of the men in the trench. Our commanding officer is sending us up again to the fighting line: to take our place with that sentry who froze at his post. "See," that is the first thing He is saying to us, "See the nearness and the strength of the enemy; see the infection of the leader's own presence; see, son of man, I have set thee a watchman."

And the first condition of the longed-for Renewal is that we shall rise up one by one to obey.

III.

What is the inspiration of this shepherd toil? "As I live, saith the Lord God, because My flock became meat to every beast of the field, neither did My

shepherds search for My flock, behold I will require My flock at their hand.” It is not time, but eternity, that tests our shepherds’ work. “If the watchman see the sword come, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.”

I do not desire to labour this point; I do desire to press it.

God gives to his pastor many excellent gifts. The wall opposite the prayer-desk where Richard Baxter prayed was blackened—so the Bishop of Liverpool has reminded us—with the breath of his prayers for his people. It is one of God’s great revival gifts that He has lately given to many of us fresh access to power through prayer. He gives us in the second place the glorious pastoral gift of love. More love is one of the most pressing needs of the Church. And revival on any large scale will, I believe, come much in proportion as the people in our parishes find in us that sympathy with their just needs and aspirations which to them is love’s interpretation.

But shall I be understood if I affirm that God’s chief pastoral gift to us, as it certainly was to Richard Baxter, is that sensitive anticipation, that indescribable awe, by which every choice, whether of courage or of fear, whether of duty or inclination, that moulds our earthly life, is seen in its immense relationship to the life beyond. “The Holy Ghost,” we are assured, “shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” It is this third illumination of the spirit of which I speak. To see our flocks *sub specie aeternitatis* is to have power to lead them.

“None of us here need saving” was the reply this Christmas to a working-man when he told his mates in his own way what Christmas meant to him. That is the reply, I am afraid, of a vast percentage

to the offer of the Gospel. "Ninety per cent. of men to-day," said a shrewd observer to me this Advent, "are Determinists." This is, I think, the chief source of our deep-seated trouble. Baxter, be it remembered, found something of this same trouble. For of the England of that day Bunyan writes that the helmet with which Diabolos arms Mansoul against God is the belief that all will end well with a man whatsoever life he leads. Baxter's writings show the artillery with which he pierced that defence. To him "the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." To him the power behind his shepherding was this same awe, this chastened expectancy, with which in all things he looked forward to the hopes and the fears of the life to come.

And as we receive again this same gift of Divine proportion we shall recover this same persuasive power. This shall be the inspiration of our shepherd's tenet. This shall be our revival power. This shall overcome the loneliness and the coldness of our watchman's task—this passion, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear,

Many to save with thyself,
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd: to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

IV.

Yes, that freezing coldness! Baxter, faithful watchman as our people knew, was cast into prison, slain by it. And as we salute our sentry, gripped and pierced by that deadly cold, he has one final beckoning word for us.

This revival, my brethren, that we pray for, don't let us imagine that it will come in like some all-embracing prairie fire. Don't let us hang back wait-

ing for others to warm us through. If it comes at all, it will come like little fires lighted here and there in loyal breasts, proof against the coldness around. Be yourself faithful and the fire will spread. That frozen sentry lives as an unquenchable fire of faithfulness; and be assured of this, in other ways than you dream of, men from you will catch the flame.

Do you remember how, in the Confessions of St. Augustine, Pontitianus describes the life of Antony, and tells how, one after another, to quote Augustine's own phrase, "caught fire" from that heroic life. Antony had died before he knew that. He had heard God's call; and he rose up and went out, as he tells us, to try to be the most prayerful, the most disciplined, the most courteous of the saints of God. He was faithful and he had his reward.

And now, in like manner, God is saying to each of us once more, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the House of Israel." "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee thy crown," the crown of bringing many into life.

THE AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST—

By

THE REV. J. GOUGH McCORMICK, M.A.,

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My subject is the ambassador of Christ, and I shall begin with a contrast which, if it is overdrawn in any part, will, nevertheless, have served its purpose if it helps us to concentrate our minds upon the single thought which it is my business to put before you and before myself.

A visitor from the distant planet of Saturn was present at an important function at one of the capitals of the Great Powers. It was a brilliant scene. Everything was well ordered. Great men were present; some of them great because of what they were, others because of what they had done. Presently the doors were thrown open, and a name was called out which the visitor from Saturn did not catch. There was an instant hush of the buzz of conversation. All eyes were turned in the one direction as a man in uniform entered the room. There was nothing striking about the man himself. He was rather insignificant than otherwise, yet he carried himself with dignity; and, though evidently used to his surroundings, he moved as one who was conscious that he had high duties to perform. "Who is he?" asked the visitor from Saturn. "And why should so insignificant a person

produce such an impression of dignity?" And the answer came, "It is true that he is not a very magnificent person in himself, but he is the Ambassador of England, and he carries himself with dignity because he is present in the public exercise of his high office."

Shortly afterwards the visitor from Saturn went to church. He noticed that the people bowed their heads and knelt as they came in. "This, then, must be even a greater court," he said to himself. Solemn music prepared the people for the beginning of the service. A white-robed procession began to appear from the vestry. The congregation for the greater part rose. Boys in surplices came first, men, also in surplices, followed to their places. Behind them walked an official carrying a mace or some insignia of office; and, last of all, a man clothed also in white, but with other garments which seemed to mark him off as more important than the rest. But his actions seemed to belie the dignity of the procession. As soon as he had passed into the church it was apparent that his hood was all awry, and his stole hung down on one side much further than the other. He had hardly got to the centre of the aisle before he obviously remembered that he had forgotten something and waved a choir-boy to him, and, with somewhat vivid gesticulation, sent him to get it. Having arrived at the reading desk, he stared round at the people before he too knelt down, and then sat back in his seat and stared about again until the organ stopped playing. He then rose, and, at a verbal gallop, recited a sing-song invitation to the people to confession; and, that being completed, stood up and reeled off another set of words, the solemnity of which was much diminished by a pure formality of manner and the meaningless drawl in which it was delivered. When the sermon came it was noticeable as the only earnest utterance of the service; but its effect was sadly marred, first, by an

obvious lack of preparation, and, second, by the fact that the preacher applied nothing to the actual needs and conditions of the day, while he had not even taken the trouble to learn the elementary lessons necessary to make himself heard and understood by the congregation to whom he was speaking. And "Who is this," said the visitor from Saturn, "this fussy, formal, and irreverent person whose very voice seems to depreciate the value of these sacred words, and who seems to proclaim by all that he does that this service is one over which it is not worth while to take any particular trouble?" "That," said his informant, "that is the Ambassador of Almighty God, occupied in the public exercise of his high and solemn office."

* * * * *

There are, my brethren, many terms under which we might consider the public duties of the clergyman. We might think of him as priest, minister, steward, evangelist, teacher. But, in order that I may not be too diffuse, I shall confine myself strictly to my subject of the ambassador. I shall only touch upon other functions in so far as the ambassadorial idea is found within them.

Now, if it is true, as is written in Proverbs, that "a faithful ambassador is health" (Proverbs xiii. 17), or, in other words, that the well-being of the body politic in the Christian sense is materially advanced by the faithfulness of its ambassadors, we can do no better service to-day, whether to the cause of our country or our God, than to restate, or, if necessary, to recapture for ourselves, the full splendour and the tremendous responsibility of 2 Cor. v. 20. Let me quote to you the words with which you are entirely familiar: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In that list there is a crescendo of responsibility. In

the first place, we are ambassadors. That position in itself, were it never so secular, should be enough to save us from the faults of personal conceit, petty pride, and slipshod carelessness. But more. We are ambassadors of Christ. Vast as are the responsibilities of speaking as a representative of England, what are they as compared with the responsibility of speaking as a representative of Jesus Christ our Lord? And, in order to drive home the thought, St. Paul amplifies it, "As though God did beseech you by us." Terrible in its majesty is the united voice of a people. We can hear it speaking in France at this moment. Small wonder is it that men have said *Vox populi, vox Dei*. Infinitely more terrible for you and for me, as we think of ourselves, is the fact that our voices are to be an expression of the voice of God Almighty. *Vox populi, vox Dei?* Yes, sometimes, perhaps. *Vox legati, vox Dei?* It is our very business. Is not the terror of that thought enough to make us throw ourselves upon our faces before Him, whose wretched interpreters we are? God be merciful to me a sinner!

We shall consider, first of all, the ambassadorial function; secondly, and briefly, the ambassadorial equipment; and, thirdly, the ambassadorial opportunity of the present day.

The Function of the Ambassador.

I shall deal with his function in three particulars: in the Pulpit, in the Reading Desk, at the Lord's Table.

(1) And first in the Pulpit. One of the results of the Oxford Movement was, without doubt, to break the tyranny of the pulpit which prevailed in Georgian and Early Victorian days. Just as the great three-decker obscured the Holy Table, so preaching obscured worship and dominated religion. The Oxford Movement removed the three-decker, which

was good ; brought into prominence worship, which was better ; and disparaged the sermon, which, if a necessity at first, was in its outcome lamentable. The consequence has been that there has grown up a generation which has been taught to regard the sermon as a matter of comparative unimportance. Little or no trouble was taken in theological colleges to teach, in any adequate sense, the art of preaching. But, worst of all, the very foundation and inspiration of all worthy preaching was systematically ignored—that in the pulpit the speaker stands to speak to immortal souls as nothing less than the ambassador of God. I do not hesitate to say that the emphasis laid upon teaching about merely Church duties at the expense of preaching about righteousness, mercy, truth, God and His Gospel has been disastrous. It is all very well to fire off phrases such as “The Church to teach and the Bible to prove,” but we should always beware of basing conduct on pithy phrases ; for it has been well said that an epigram is always half a lie, and very often in a pithy phrase it is the phrasing that is true and the pith that is not. This attitude towards preaching has produced that lamentable spirit which would inculcate in the minds of our clergy that it is their business to get up into the pulpit for “a ten minutes’ talk to my people,” for which preparation is unnecessary, execution immaterial, matter unimportant, and aim completely vague.

Now God forbid that we should disparage the pulpit as a place of teaching. As far as I can read the signs of the times, I think that to-day we need doctrinal sermons. We certainly need careful and deliberate instruction upon the way of salvation, and that not under the conditions of the year 50, or the year 325, or even the year 1549, but fearlessly applied to the precise conditions of the year 1916. But it is not this or that particular use of the pulpit which

needs emphasis to-day. It is not so much the teaching or the exhorting or the rebuking or the inspiring functions of the pulpit that we are in danger of forgetting. It is something that goes much deeper than any of these. It is something quite fundamental. It is nothing less than this: that when we stand up to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in any of its activities we stand there as the ambassador of God. Forget that, and sooner or later your preaching is bound to fail of its purpose. It will become disproportioned, smooth, soulless, formal, and, worst of all, self-centred. But remember that, and it will be humble—for who am I that I should be thus called to speak in the stead of Christ? It will be modern—for it will plead with the actual men and women of to-day under the conditions of to-day—“Be *ye* reconciled to God.” It will be living, converting, saving—for the Holy Spirit will be able to take even our halting, stupid words and make Christ live to the conscience of those who hear. In the pulpit, then, with awe, and with humility, and at the same time with an inspiring certainty, we must recognise ourselves as the ambassadors of God about our Master’s business.

2. The second function of the ambassador is in the Reading Desk.

And here I shall confine myself entirely to the duty and privilege of Absolution.

As far at least as Morning and Evening Prayer are concerned, of all the parts of our public duties that which is most neglected is Absolution. Like the Exhortation and General Confession, it suffers from routine; for, unlike the Collect and Lessons, it does not change. We shall perhaps also be prepared to admit that it suffers, or at least it has suffered, from theological interpretation, and that not from one school only but from every school. If you are very “high” it is the office of the priest and his commission to absolve that matters, and not this form of words. If you are very

“ broad ” the Absolution ceases to have any particular importance ; and if you are very “ low ” it is apt to be regarded as dangerous to emphasise it at all. Thus routine and theology together seem to have combined to rob us of what should be one of the most solemn moments of the service.

Now, if we ask ourselves the question, “ How best can the Absolution be restored to the position of dignity and of inspiring assurance which it ought to hold ? ” I answer at once, “ By the recollection on our own part of our ambassadorial function in the Absolution.”

If at the end of July 1914 I had by some mischance found myself in the presence of the Kaiser, and I had said to him that if he invaded Belgium England would come in, I do not flatter myself that my words would have had any effect whatever except possibly to make him angry. But when Sir Edward Goschen told the German Chancellor the same thing the effect was instantaneous and tremendous. And wherein lay the difference ? I should have told the truth, and he did no more ! The difference, of course, lay here—that whereas I should have spoken only as a private individual, he was authorised and commissioned in the name of England. The analogy is close enough for our purpose this morning. If any private individual likes to say that upon certain conditions God’s pardon is granted to the sinner, well and good. He has told the truth and we can say no more. And, indeed, there are some souls which can be satisfied with this information. But when we stand up in the church after the solemn Confession, we stand there not as private individuals, but as the ambassadors of God. He Who alone pardoneth and absolveth has given to us power and commandment to declare and pronounce to His people being penitent the absolution and remission of their sins. How can anyone gabble an Absolution if he will but reflect for one moment on what he is saying and in what capacity he is speaking ? If we are to

make the first part of our service a reality—and God knows in these days it needs to be made a reality for us all—we shall best do it by restoring to our recollection, and, with our recollection, to our voice and to our manner, our ambassadorial function in the Absolution.

3. The third function of the ambassador is at the Lord's Table. By a common testimony nothing has been more real and vital to many of our young men at the Front than those sacred moments when in some ruined house, in a dug-out, in the friendly shelter of some ditch, they have taken the Communion together. The nearness of the possibility of death, the sense of comradeship in a common service, and perhaps the very absence of the customary ritual, have combined to bring out the reality, the essence, of the service. Christ has been known to them in the breaking of Bread. And with the memory of these Communions, these wonderful Communions, upon them our young men will be coming back to their Communions in our churches. Will they find the same intense reality in our Communions at home? I answer that question by saying "Yes; just in proportion as we are true to the ambassadorial idea." For if in the pulpit we are God's ambassadors in word, so at the Holy Table we are God's ambassadors in action. In the pulpit we beseech our people "Be ye reconciled to God." At the Lord's Table we, as it were, put the hand of the pilgrim, of the sinful but repentant sinner, of the strong man who wants to serve Christ better, into the very hand of Christ. Let me develope that thought for a moment. It is our blessed business to make Christ real and to efface ourselves. Our task here, above all, is to keep our own individuality in the background. Never is self-assertiveness so unpardonable as it is here. Never is controversy so odious as when it is suggested here. I have heard the mystic words of consecration, "This is My Body," rendered with such an accent upon the word "is"—"This is My Body"—that they became

a challenge, and the whole atmosphere of the upper room at once was lost. I have heard them said with a studied indifference which suggested the danger of a misinterpretation, and again the atmosphere of the upper room was lost. But let the words be said as He might have said them in those last solemn moments of His life, and again we are linked, not only with the upper room of that first wonderful Sacrament, but with the living Christ of the no less wonderful Sacrament of to-day.

Nor is it otherwise with the ritual. It is always a matter of regret to me personally when other ritual is added to the Consecration Prayer. We have our Lord's, and that is unique. And yet His ritual is so overshadowed in many churches by this, that, and the other merely human addition that the simple acts of the Divine Institution are obscured. Let it be our task so to speak and so to act that the Lord Jesus may reign in His service. In the presence of the King the ambassador effaces himself, and we shall have performed our function just in proportion as our people can say of the Communions which we take: "I never saw the clergyman; I saw Jesus. I saw Him break the Bread and bless the Cup. I heard His Words. He made the Feast. He gave to me Himself; and verily and indeed I have taken and received Him into my soul."

II.

The Ambassadorial Equipment.

I have spoken of the ambassadorial function. I can only deal with his equipment briefly and partially, for the real essence of his equipment is to be found in those considerations of personal contact with his Saviour and of personal call and commission which are to be the subjects for this afternoon.

I will only say then that the equipment of the ambassador which is wholly vital is the possession

of a humble trust in Jesus Christ; an unshaken obedience to His Will; a complete loyalty to His Person, and a burning desire so to lead men to Christ that His Kingdom may come in earth as it is in Heaven. This is vital because the ambassador, after all, is a man. He is of the same flesh and blood as other men, and his commission gives him no royal road to service, and carries no exemption from temptation. He will never be able to carry his Master's message to the souls of men unless he has learnt to say:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling.

But having said that, I go on to note the necessity of an equipment of another kind. It is the equipment of capacity. God has given us all brains, personality, ability to work and to take pains. "Orare et laborare" is the only possible motto for an ambassador. To try to do without either prayer or effort is to court—and assuredly to achieve—disaster. We must use all the gifts that God has given. What an insult, then, to our Master is a service which we have not taken the trouble to think out beforehand! My children were playing at Church at my house the other day, and the one whose turn it was to be the clergyman evidently considered it to be part of his clerical duty to call up one of the other children and whisper something in the course of a hymn. It was what he had seen me do! I have seldom felt so much rebuked! For though after-thoughts will occur in the best-regulated services, yet they are apt to diminish reverence and to weaken the sense of God's presence. Similarly, what a wicked presumption is an unprepared sermon if it is unprepared because we have not taken the trouble to prepare! If by any real cause we are prevented from preparing, it is our blessed privilege to know that we may rely upon the

Holy Spirit and that He can speak even through the infirmity of our words. But if the ambassador of God coolly walks into the pulpit and expects the Holy Ghost to make his sermon for him while he confidently speaks in the stead of Christ, he is coming perilously near to blasphemy. Nor is it otherwise with any of our public duties. To read the Lessons so badly that people cannot hear, or so irreverently that they would never guess it was the Word of God; to pray so formally and at such a rate that a keen young fellow straight home from the red-hot religion of a trench goes away in sheer disgust—as I have known happen in one case at least—these and kindred faults are the flat contradiction of that consecration of self and all its powers which should be the mark of Christ's ambassadors.

The use of prayer and capacity as well as reliance upon call and commission—these things go to form the equipment of the ambassador.

III.

The Ambassadorial Opportunity.

I turn lastly to the ambassadorial opportunity of to-day. It is significant for our days that the text which conveys the supreme charter of our ambassadorial position is closely linked with the text which conveys the supreme call of urgency in the matter of the preaching of the Gospel. There is no break between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth chapter of 2 Corinthians, and the paragraph is wound up with the quotation, “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Never did the urgency of that call strike home more strongly than to-day, whether we regard ourselves as ambassadors of Christ or, looking at the same truth in another way, as ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. As ambassadors of Christ we speak to-day to men who have been stirred to the very depths of their

being. They have known realities as they have never known them before, because the vanities and impertinences with which we are wont to cover up the real foundations of life have been dissipated by the blast of war. Men have seen that the Fatherhood of God is the only possible foundation of belief if the world is not to fall in pieces. They have seen, even in their own lives, that the Cross whereon self is nailed, the Cross of vicarious sacrifice by which Christ died for the race, even as to-day one man dies for another, the Cross of willing service borne in the following of Jesus Christ is the only possible way of salvation. Men have seen that a world dominated, not by might without conscience, but by the Holy Spirit of God, is the only hope of the human race. Many a conscience which for long years has ceased to speak has wakened to life to-day. Many a broken heart is aching for comfort. Many a man halts between two opinions in days when the ordinary guide-posts of custom have been wrenched up and thrown aside. And Christ has the answer to every question, the satisfaction for every longing! And we are the ambassadors for Christ. Never had we an opportunity like to-day! The ambassador must speak with an earnestness, a sympathy, and a conviction which he has never had before.

2. But we are also ambassadors of the Kingdom. When Christianity was brought to earth the message of salvation was first stated in terms of a Kingdom. This was the word of the Forerunner, "Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This was the inaugural word of our Lord's public ministry after He was baptised: "At that time Jesus began to preach and to say 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'" This was the commission of the twelve when they were first sent out to their ministry: "As ye go preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'" But, my brethren, it has been the curse of the world that the

idea of the Kingdom has been lost. There is no Kingdom of God in the world to-day which can satisfy the plain language of the New Testament. It is reduced to-day to an aggregate of individuals chosen from the ranks of churches as nominally loyal to Christ as they are actually hostile to each other. There is no Church as Christ conceived it. There are only the broken fragments of the Church within the world, and we have all been made to learn by our accursed divisions the awful truth of our Saviour's prophesy, "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." Looking at the world as it is to-day a John the Baptist might well come preaching a new message. He might preach it in the Vatican of ecclesiastical authority at Rome, in the lecture halls of higher critical Germany, in the temples of Russian orthodoxy, in the cathedrals of the Protestant Catholicity of England, and in the chapels of Nonconformity. And his message would be the same, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is lost!" And shall the ambassadors of the Kingdom keep silence?

But that is only half the truth, for it is the dawning possibility of this age that the idea of the Kingdom may be regained. To-day, as never before in the experience of any man in this church, the thoughts of men are turned from the individual and are set upon the kingdom, empire, state. The individual, indeed, counts for little to-day. Men see that it is the common cause that must be paramount. For the sake of the Kingdom it is seen to be right that a man should sacrifice his interests, his money, and even his life itself. Our poets, our statesmen, our economists and every patriot are all saying the same thing. Nay, more, millions of our fellow-countrymen are practising it. And shall the ambassadors keep silence? Never had we such an opportunity. To a world starting aghast from the possibility of brutality enthroned as the overlord of the earth we have to offer a Kingdom which is a

brotherhood under the Sun of Righteousness. To a world war-stricken, doubt-driven, heart-sick, and heavy laden we can offer a Kingdom of inward peace and equal laws and the blessed binding up of wounds. To a world afire as never before with the glories of self-sacrifice, with a spirit purged, at least in part, from the dross of earthly ideals, doing great deeds greatly by earth and sea and air, and all aflame with the heroism of endurance we have to tell of a Kingdom worth living for and fighting for and even dying for as never was any kingdom here on earth.

And the opportunity is for to-day. The Kingdom is at hand in this day of the Lord. Shall the ambassadors be found wanting? God forbid!

THE AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST—II.

By

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“Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we beseech you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—2 Cor. v. 20.

St. Paul was in no doubt as to his commission. “We are ambassadors”; we are “in Christ’s stead.” Nor was he uncertain as to his task. The word “beseech” occurs twice “as though God did beseech you.” “We beseech you in Christ’s stead.” His task was to speak to men as if God, Who loved the world, was speaking, as Christ, Who died for all, would do if He was there, and to urge, as both would do, everyone to be reconciled to God. At the close of his life, although he declared himself as the “chief of sinners” and as one who had nothing to glory in “save the Cross of Christ,” yet he could say: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

Here we have presented to us three thoughts in which it may be well for us to dwell.

(1) St. Paul’s certainty as to his commission as an ambassador of Christ.

(2) The great task entrusted to him “to beseech men in Christ’s stead” to be reconciled to God.

(3) His retrospect at the close of a long life.

St. Paul's Certainty.

First, St. Paul's certainty as to his commission as an ambassador. Can anyone who studies his life and reads his words doubt for a moment that St. Paul had received a commission, not from men, but from God? It is impossible to conceive such a life without the heavenly Vision. He had surely heard a voice saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and his whole soul responded, "Here am I, send me." *And he was sent of God and of Christ, and he went.* So it was with all the Apostles. They knew not only Whom they believed, but *by* Whom they were *sent*. It was this which gave them confidence, courage, and power. They always saw the "Invisible" who had sent them. Brethren, is it so with us? Do we merely in an ecclesiastical sense believe that we are ambassadors, or do we so believe that we are so distinctly and so separately sent of God that it is "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel"? Unless it is the latter our ministry will be a failure. The sense of God "thrusting" us out into His vineyard must be felt at every step. Is it so? Is the response to God's Call the overwhelming response of our life? Let me put it wildly, extravagantly if you will. If to-morrow we became a Carnegie in wealth, should we go on "preaching the old, old story" because we could not help doing so any more than we could help breathing? Is it with us morning, noon, and night? "I am sent of God"; I am here "in Christ's stead." An English Ambassador at a foreign Court can never forget that he is not a private person, but must always remember that he is there in his King's stead, to represent his King and country and not himself. But he is there in times of peace. The moment war is declared he is withdrawn, but we are ambassadors in the enemy's country in the time of war. Our path is never smooth, our task is never easy. We can never be on terms of

intimacy with those around. Our citizenship is above, and we are sent to win the allegiance of the whole world to our Sovereign Lord the King, to beseech men to be reconciled to God. That is our one object in life. It is not one among many things. It stands alone. It is our life. For me to live is *Christ*. Christ Who died for men. Christ in Whose stead I beseech men to turn to God. How many of us live in that sense of God's Presence, of God's Communion? We believe in the Real, if not the Local, Presence, in the Holy Communion, and we also declare that He is present in the Word. But do we feel His Presence? Is He in the pulpit with us? Is He in the preparation for the pulpit? St. Paul as he besought men in Christ's stead felt the Christ Himself within. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Are we sure of the Real Presence within? Do we remember that our commission to "Go" is bound up with "Lo, I am with you alway"?

Brethren, forgive me if I press once more, "Are you living as ambassadors of Christ?" Let each man answer before his Lord.

The Great Task.

Secondly, think of the great task entrusted to St. Paul "to beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God." In low Latin we find the word "*ambasciator*," a waiter. St. Paul gloried in the title "servant," slave of Jesus Christ. In Christ's stead. Our Lord himself had said, "As Thou hast sent me, even so have I also sent them." "God's purpose in sending the Christ was also the purpose of Christ in sending the Apostles," that the world might be won to God through the Cross. That was how all the Apostles understood their commission and their message. We are in the true Apostolic succession when we proclaim "the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God." It was their one theme. They had no other.

“They ceased not to preach Jesus Christ.” “The Jesus Whom I preach unto you.” “But we preach Christ Crucified.” “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord.” “That I might preach Him among the heathen.” “Preach the Word.” “Preach the Gospel.” “There is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” “Preach the Kingdom of God.” “That remission of sins might be preached.” “Preached through Jesus Christ the forgiveness of sins.” “He preached Jesus and the Resurrection.” “Jesus Who was preached among you by us.”

The message of the Apostles was always the same. “We preach Christ and Him Crucified.” Is this the one message of the Church to-day? Alas! is it not true that the Church has been largely led aside from her message and her task? She had thought and taught too much about herself, the Bride, and this has frequently obscured her Lord. She must get back to her One Message, “We preach Christ.” The less we hear to-day of the Bride and the more of the Bridegroom, the stronger will the Church become. “Preach the Word,” is the exhortation in the Ordinal, and “the Word” is Christ. If science, or philosophy, or politics invite your attention, tell them that you have a greater message to give than theirs, and you cannot come down to them. In the lower sphere they may do good, but all of them combined cannot save a soul, purify a heart, or make a single sinner fit for Heaven. “It is,” said Mr. Gladstone, “the preaching of Christ our Lord which must be the secret and substance, the centre and heart, of all preaching.” He was right. To-day we are meeting under the shadow of this mighty war. Day by day our lads are leaving this country to take their place in that fighting-line from which every hour souls pass through the Valley of Death into the hands of God. This is not the time to discuss prayers for the dead, but when I read, as read I do, letter after

letter protesting against any such practice, I ask, Does the writer of this letter realise that his disbelief in the efficiency of prayers for the dead throws upon him a great and overwhelming responsibility regarding the living? If there is *no* hope hereafter, if no prayer can avail after once the soul has left the body, how awful is the position of the ambassador of God who strains not every power he possesses to beseech men to be reconciled to God! Upon Evangelicals who hold these views there rests, more than upon any other class, responsibility to preach a present, full, and free salvation. But, my brethren, are we doing so? This is a time when we must not mince matters or hesitate to use plain language. I think I have had opportunities such as are given to few men to know the position of the Evangelical school of thought throughout the world, and I say, with a due sense of responsibility, standing as I do in this church, which, in a sense, may be called the Mecca of modern Evangelicals, that the old Evangel is not being preached as our fathers preached it, or as St. Paul preached it. What are the texts chosen to-day? When were the texts I read a short time ago the substance of our sermons? Some time ago I heard a sermon in a C.P.A.S. parish in which the words God, Christ, Jesus, Sin, Salvation, Faith, Heaven were never once used. This, no doubt, was an extreme case, but do we as Evangelicals determine when we ascend the pulpit "not to know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified"? The pulpit may be the centre of overwhelming power, and it may become the scene of tragic disaster. Now, brethren, if last Sunday night, as we ascended the pulpit stairs, an angel had challenged us, "What is your aim to-night? What do you *expect* to be the result of your sermon?" what *should* we, what *could* we, have replied? Go back to Sunday night? What was your text? What was your sermon? What was the result? Was it a sermon

to save souls? The title of one of Newman's addresses was "The Salvation of the Hearer; the Motive of the Preacher." Was that your definite motive? If some recruit had come into the church for his last Sunday night in England before going to the Front and perhaps to his death, with the thought in his heart, "What must I do to be saved?" what help would your sermon have been to him? Spurgeon, when he preached, always remembered that hearts might be changed for ever as he preached. Did you and I so remember? Henry Wood Beecher, on his death-bed, said, "The greatest object of the preacher is not to teach theology, is not to engage in controversy, but it is to save souls." We believe that, but do we preach that kind of sermon? Moody on one occasion said to Dr. Chapman, "You are making a mistake in your ministry. What you are doing does not count for much. Your preaching—I say it in all kindness—does not save souls." Would anyone be justified in saying the same words to us? "Do our sermons save souls?" If they do not, what are they worth? Such sermons are nowadays looked down upon. I remember some years ago I was asked to preach at a certain church, and on hesitating was told, "You need not really preach; a simple Evangelistic address will do." What would St. Paul have thought of such a statement? Is a sermon one fit to be preached by the ambassador of Christ in the House of God unless it is really and truly Evangelistic, unless it not only contains, but is the Gospel, and the Gospel is Christ, and the centre of it all is the Cross? Ought we not to be ashamed to preach the sermons we do when we have such a glorious Gospel to proclaim of a salvation without limit or extent or power? The Arabians have a proverb—"He is the best orator who can turn men's ears into eyes." The best preacher is he who can make his hearers "see Jesus only." The famous preacher Jowett tells how one Sunday he went out to

a prayer-meeting at a camp meeting outside New York, at which he was to speak, when one engaging in prayer said, "O Lord, we thank Thee for our brother. Now blot him out. Reveal Thyself." Sirs, we would *see* Jesus—preach Christ. If the Apostles of old would not leave the preaching of the Gospel even to "serve tables" on which provisions were laid for widows, how closely ought we to keep to our one text, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified"? As Bishop Wilberforce said, "Get unto the Cross of Christ, look at those wounds, see in them what sin is! See in them the greatness of your Master's love! And as a ransomed sinner minister to ransomed sinners! Take your censer and run in and stand between the living and the dead, for verily the plague has begun."

A Wonderful Retrospect.

But lastly, St. Paul had a wonderful retrospect in his old age. Churches planted—souls saved. What is our retrospect? This may appear a strange Islington paper, but I am not going to apologise for it. There is something wrong with the Church, for her ministers are not winning souls, and I pray that, from this gathering to-day, there may go forth a band of men determined to "win souls." I know some may be called teachers, others Evangelists, but by whatever name he is called, every minister of the Gospel is called upon to "win souls." A clergyman said to me one day, "My temperament is such that I could not preach an Evangelistic sermon." My reply was, "Christ, who could turn a Boanerges into the Apostle of Love, can make you a soul-winner if you wish to be one." Such preaching may disturb your congregations as they are at present. It was to the Greeks foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block, but it saved souls. We clergy have to make our choice. We have to decide whether we will be what are known as "intellectual preachers," "popular

preachers," or "soul-winners." Which are we? There is a dearth of conversions. Why? The result of higher criticism, says one. The growth of ritualism, says another. While a third replies, "The social conditions of the people." Brethren, do not let us excuse ourselves. The dearth of conversions is owing to none of these things. The Apostles had to meet these things in another form and worse than these things, but they got conversions. Wesley and Whitfield had a Church and a nation worse to deal with than we have, and yet they got conversions. Why do not we get conversions? Do we? How many in this church had a conversion that he knew about last Sunday? How many conversions did you know about last year? It is all very well to talk about the silent growth, but even a Lydia is known sometimes. What about the drunkards in your parishes? How many were saved last year? If Evangelicals cannot save drunkards, harlots, and prostitutes, then I say there is something wrong with Evangelicals, and the sooner we find out what it is the better. Some would say it is our surpliced choir and semi-musical services. It is not, for I have known good soul-saving work done under those conditions and deadness and coldness elsewhere. The cause is deeper down than that. We have ceased to regard sin as our fathers did. We have discarded hell. We have not kept in the Cross. We have not a personal experience of sanctification, and we have lost the power of the Spirit. This is a strong indictment, and I would be the last man to make it unless I believed it true. If it is true of our school of thought it is true of the Church generally. We have built churches, multiplied services, and largely ceased to win souls. In the dioceses of London and Southwark, with all the Church's activity, the communicants only number about 5 per cent. of the population. Don't let us blame ritualism, rationalism, or anything

else for this result. There are sufficient Evangelical churches in both dioceses themselves to show a very different result if they were alive. Do not let me be misunderstood. I know full well the lives of devotion and whole-hearted service which many of our brethren are living, and yet I ask you, each one of you, to look round and tell me how many churches you knew where there are clear definite conversions as you and I understand conversions. Have we not even ceased to expect conversions? If we had an enquirer, how should we deal with him? Do we know how to point a soul to Christ? Have we a doctrine of assurance to preach? Forgive me, what books do we read? Modern Thought must be studied, but side by side with it let us keep our Bunyan, our Finney, and such books as *The Cross in Christian Experience*, by W. M. Clow; *The Twofold Life*, by A. J. Gordon; and even *Broken Earthenware*. These books will help us to let our congregations know and feel that God loves them all, that Christ died for them all, and that the Holy Spirit is present to renew and sanctify them all. But above all we must remember that, although in a sense in the Cross we find all we want, there is a sense in which it will not suffice. Christ was on the earth for forty days after the Cross had been lifted up, but it was only after the Holy Ghost had come that we find men saved through it being lifted up. The great need to-day is the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The Cross can never be fully seen until the Light of the Holy Ghost is thrown upon it. That may be one reason why our Church lays down the rule that when we draw near to the Holy Table we must not only have been baptised, but also confirmed, so that, coming as men filled with the Holy Ghost, we may see Him. That surely is the reason why before we are commissioned to "dispense the Word of God," we pray, "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire." Our Church recognises to the full

what the New Testament so strongly emphasises—that we only receive power to see the Cross and to preach the Cross after the Holy Ghost has come. Do we believe that? The ambassador's instructions are clear. He must be guided by the Holy Ghost. Are we so guided? What influence has He upon our lives? Are we men sanctified by the Holy Ghost and moved by Him? The other day I heard of a clergyman who was not a great preacher as the world calls preaching, but whose church was packed to the doors, and to whom God gave many souls, and an old curate gave surely the secret when he said, "We could always hear him saying softly as he mounted the pulpit, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, I believe in the Holy Ghost.' "

Some of us brethren are nearing the end of our ministry. Is it becoming more spiritual, more powerful as the physical decays, or do the wells seem to be running dry? No water—no souls refreshed or raised to life. An old man—a castaway—unuseable. The saddest picture on earth. Some of us are in the prime of life or just at the commencement of our ministry. What is our ministry like? Is it already a disappointment? Are we already saying, "Why can we not cast them out?" Brothers, old and young, we are here as the ministers of God in a period like unto which there is none else.

The world's great heart is aching,
Fiercely aching in the night.

What a responsibility! What a privilege to be the ambassador of Christ, beseeching men, *in Christ's stead*, to be reconciled to God! To have the one, the only, message which can put the world right: stop all wars; cure all hearts; purify all lives; and save for all eternity the souls of men. Oh magnify such an office, but magnify it upon your knees! It is not the office that will save you. That can only be the

Gospel which you preach to others. Has it saved you ? Oh forgive me if I ask solemnly this question : Do you, who preach to others, know *your* sins forgiven ? Do you *yourself* see the Cross ? Have you received the Holy Spirit ? Do you rejoice in victory over sin ? If not, here is the secret of failure.

Once more, brethren, let us return to the work to which we were called—"To preach Christ and Him crucified," to aim only at winning souls, and every moment ourselves to realise :

This is all *my* hope and all *my* plea,
For *me* the Saviour died.

THE MAN AND HIS SAVIOUR—I.

By

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To consider this subject is to go to the very heart of the Gospel, to touch upon that which is deepest and most sacred in the life and ministry of each one of us. It is a subject by itself; it excels all others in its wonder and beauty; it is a subject with which no other can be compared in its possibilities. As we take it, we who are gathered as shepherds, as ambassadors, must think of those committed to us, and of all others for whom Christ died, yet we shall be likely to help them most if to-day we think of ourselves first.

But it is all so familiar. Yes, that is the danger, but not an insuperable one. The consideration of it immediately causes us to yield ourselves up to the Holy Spirit in simple dependence. What we need He can give—reality, a hearing ear, eyes that can see. “We would see Jesus.” He will take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

We will begin by asking, “How much can the Saviour do for the man?” The answer is, All that one Who has perfect wisdom, power that knows no limit, love that passeth knowledge, can accomplish. How much can the Saviour do for the man? He can cleanse him from all the defilement of sin, take away

its guilt, deliver him from its power, sanctify him by His Spirit; He is ready to abide in his heart as His Own dwelling-place, and there continually be the secret of purity and strength in temptation, of wisdom in difficulty, of comfort in sorrow, rest and peace at all times; He can use him as His instrument in the carrying out of His own purposes of grace; He will reveal Himself through him and later receive him to Himself, that where He, the Saviour, is, there the man may be too, seeing his Saviour's face, growing more and more like to Him, serving in ministries wonderful beyond all knowledge now, and all this in union with loved ones, in fellowship with all the saints for ever and ever.

How much can the Saviour do for the man? All that the man will permit the Saviour to do. For while in infinite condescension and love He knocks at the door of the heart, calls, entreats, promises, warns, He does not force an entrance, for man has received free will, and God respects it.

And to us gathered here, and to such as us, the knowledge of all this has been entrusted. We are ambassadors of Christ, beseeching men in His Name, we are heralds of the good news, proclaiming it with the intensest earnestness, hope, and joy; to us has this grace been given, that we should make known the unsearchable riches of Christ. What a privilege! What a trust! For the best that God can give, and the most that man can receive, is contained in this trust committed to us. We, in our ministry, ever stand between the living and the dead, between the Saviour and the man, and what we are as we deliver our message, the degree in which we believe in it, the extent to which our lives are conformed to it, are all determining factors in the measure in which men are prepared to listen to it, to understand and receive it. As we think of all that the Saviour is able and willing to do for the sinner, and then of the condition

of the Church, there seems to be an enormous discrepancy. Can it be all true? Is it rhetoric, or is it fact, that the power which raised up Christ from the dead is available to usward who believe? If these words and such other words as these are the truth, how can we account for the widespread adoption of unworthy standards in our Church life, the weakness in her moral witness, the compromise with the world, the chill of her spiritual life, men and women as workers who are not fully consecrated to their Lord, and who have not received their commission from His hands, the inability to carry Christ's banner forward and the lack of the winning spirit?

Different answers can be given, but one I would urge to-day. Men do not know of a full salvation, men do not realise the renewing, transforming power of the grace of God, because the way of full salvation is often not set forth before them. The way to make the nation Christian is for the Church to be more Christian, and the Church can only be more Christian through a larger comprehension of the Gospel of Christ. The great need of the Church is the preaching of a more complete Gospel.

Three results meeting three great needs will follow.

I.

The Church will have fresh converting power. One of the most disquieting facts to-day is the fewness of conversions, and perhaps it is a sadder fact still that often they are not looked for or expected.

It is a Saviour able to save completely Who attracts sinners. When men hear so little of His love, His power and glory, when the half is not told them, will they be drawn to Him? Oh, what an unutterably solemn thing—to tell only half the truth about Jesus Christ! How many sinners are kept back from the Saviour because the simplicity, the full pardon, the eager waiting love, the all-sufficient

grace to sustain and keep, are not made plain to them! It is a great Saviour Whose redemption is plenteous, Who has glorious service awaiting the forgiven sinner, Who can uphold Him every step of the way from the first act of penitence at His feet until he sees Him face to face—it is such a Saviour to whom men will go.

Again, there is a certain softness and lack of robustness in dealing with sin, a fear of giving offence, of upsetting men and driving them away, a dilution of the Gospel claims. But the change needed is fundamental: sin must be dealt with; the message needed is nothing less than “Ye must be born again.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Where there is little conception of the holiness of the Saviour, and the greatness of His salvation, there is little realisation of the meaning of sin: the two go together. The man with a little Gospel will never deal faithfully and strongly with sin, for he understands but little both of the disease and the remedy; the man with a great Gospel fears not to tell men of their danger and to call them to repentance, because he has a great hope in Christ to offer to them. In proportion as a complete Gospel is preached will there be conversions throughout the Church.

II.

The man with a complete Gospel will teach the way of holiness. At a small informal meeting of clergy a brother recently said some such words as these: “It is hard for us clergy to break through our reserve and to admit our personal spiritual failures; but I must confess that I feel held up in my own life, I lack the assurance of victory where I know I should have it. My failure to overcome again and again, and my lack of rest in Christ, is preventing me from helping my people as I should like to be helping them.” I doubt not—if my own experience guides me

aright—but that those words, spoken simply and bravely, express the thoughts and desires of a great number. In our churches there are men and women who long to know how to overcome sin, who are ready for a message telling how much Christ can do to sanctify and keep a man from sin—but they often do not hear it.

Some forty years ago a movement was started which was at first much misunderstood and criticised, but when understood was found to be worthy of all sympathy and honour. Its central theme was “holiness by faith.” A number of men who then stood in the Church much where we stand to-day were deeply affected by it; a new power came into their lives; a new message of hope was given to them. We will enter the secrets of one man’s life, the life of Canon Harford Battersby, who was before that movement began a loved vicar and honoured clergyman. He knew much of Christ, but he longed to know more. Let him speak to us as he writes in the privacy of his Diary. I have hesitated to quote, yet thereby shall a saint magnify his Saviour and beckon us to follow him. He writes: “What an unhappy creature I am! I am just in the condition of the person described in Romans vii. This is my habitual state, however much I may realise at times the blessedness of peace and justification; and thus being anxious about myself, not being whole within, it is impossible that I can have leisure or abstraction of mind enough to treat the diseases of others, or to enter upon my work heartily.” Again, “I feel how very far I am from enjoying that peace and love and joy habitually which Christ promises. I must needs confess that I have it not; and that very ungentle and unchristian tempers often strive within me for the mastery.” Later, “I feel that I am dishonouring God and am wretched myself by living as I do; and that I *must* either go backwards or forwards,

reaching out towards the light and the glory which my blessed Saviour holds out to me, or falling back more and more into worldliness and sin. Yesterday I preached . . . and pleaded with others to *hope* for better things, redemption from *all* iniquities. Shall I not myself seek after these things? A great prize is before me; shall I not seek after it? Is it not worth every possible effort to attain to? God reveal to me the secret of this 'more excellent way' and enable me to walk in it now and always. Amen."

Such were the longings of this man's heart, and the Saviour satisfied them. He was led to attend a convention at Oxford, and there he found not so much "new truth" as "new trust." Let him tell what happened in his own words: "I believe I entered into a rest of faith on Tuesday evening which I have not known before. Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Thornton both took the miracle of the centurion's son by way of illustration of the subject, distinguishing between the *seeking* faith with which he *came* to Jesus, and the *resting* faith with which he believed the words of Jesus, 'Thy son liveth.' I said to myself, 'Has not my faith been a seeking faith when it ought to have been a resting faith? And, if so, why not exchange it for the latter? And I thought of the sufficiency of Jesus, and said, I *will rest* in Him—and I did rest in Him. I said nothing to anyone of this, and was afraid lest it should be a passing emotion; but I found that a presence of Jesus was graciously manifested to me in a way that I knew not before, and that I did *abide in Him*.'" From this time onward he possessed an abiding peace, and a power far exceeding anything he had known previously.

Brethren, would not new standards of holiness in the personal life of the clergy do much—perhaps more than anything else—to transform the Church? Do not many of us know the power of some sin, of some infirmity, of some neglect or failure in duty, which

is really robbing us of much of our power, deliverance from which would be like the removal of a dead weight which has been keeping us down, and enable us to make a fresh start with renewed life? It is not the Saviour's plan that anyone should be under the power of any kind of sin, but that we should have complete and continued deliverance. He Who calls us to holiness does not mock us. It is His Will that we should abide in Him, and that He should abide in us, that we should have rest and know that within us is an unfailing source of power. His best is for us if we will have it, and His best is Himself. "Keswick" is often criticised, but I say with sincerest conviction that the message of full salvation which has been given at Keswick is a message which is needed by the whole Church—a message that needs guarding and supplementing, a message that needs to be clothed in varying language, it may be, but a message of sanctification by faith, of the man's abiding union with his Saviour, of the fulness of the Holy Spirit. A complete Gospel will mean not only conversions in the Church, but the power for holiness which now she lacks.

III.

A complete Gospel cannot be merely subjective or individualistic; it must bring the Spirit of Christ and apply the teaching of Christ to all human relationships. It cannot be other than a Gospel of social redemption; it must involve all that Christ meant when He taught men to pray, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done."

We are approaching a time of exceptional opportunity in many ways; soon we shall be hearing more about the National Mission. Whatever its preparation and its method, the essential thing is that it shall be the proclaiming of a complete Gospel. Men are increasingly beginning to talk about revival. What is needed for the National Mission, what is

needed for revival — and God grant that the one may mean the other!—is a re-discovery of Jesus Christ—Christ able to convert, able to save completely, able to enter into and sanctify all the relations of life. Every true revival has been a time of re-discovery, when the glory of the Saviour has been made known afresh to some longing heart or to a group of men and women who have yearned and prayed for a fresh revealing of His power. With the joy of new finding, with the wonder of a new discovery, with freshness of witness, they have testified to Christ; the veil has been rent from the eyes of others, they have seen in Him all that they needed, and revival has spread. Lord Jesus, to-day all men seek Thee; open our eyes that we may behold Thee afresh, that we may so tell of Thee that others may know Thee too.

And this time affords a special opportunity for Evangelicals. All that I have tried to speak of is our very life-blood. The call to us is to be true to our name. The Evangelicalism which is needed to-day is not that which is largely negative and controversial, but loving, positive, burning with a passion for the salvation of men, and for righteousness. Two things I would venture to urge.

(a) We must take our full part in the life of the Church. The very fact that there are some who are seeking to bring her back to mediævalism—and may God save and defend the Church from their influence—makes it the more important that we should do this, and give our witness to the Gospel of the free and full grace of God. We are only true to our trust as we take our place in the larger life of the Church, but the more we do so the more clearly do we need to understand the nature of our trust.

(b) We must realise that our share in the life of the Church, and the influence of those truths which to us mean so much and which we believe to be so vital, will depend to a great extent upon the sacrificial character

of our lives. To me and to you "Kikuyu" and all that it stands for are the fruit of the Gospel, a preparation for that reunion for which our hearts long, and which we look for in God's own time and in God's own way, but it will be hastened not only by appeals to history and skill in controversy, but still more by the witness of saintly lives. In the Kingdom of God holiness is stronger evidence than argument. It is the school in the Church which reveals the greatest personal devotion to Christ which ultimately will win the hearts of the people. Love can win where mere orthodoxy will fail. Men will listen to our message and believe in our Evangelical principles as we interpret in our life and ministry and in our relations with our fellows the love and humility, the patience and the readiness to think the best, the unselfishness and the simplicity of Jesus.

So we are bound to come to this personal question : How much have we discovered of what the Saviour can do for the man ?

For a moment let us think of others. How many brother ministers of the Gospel are largely failing in their ministry ? There is little or no spiritual life in their parishes ; they talk about their special difficulties and they blame their people, instead of first searching their own heart ; but we know, as a brother said to me recently, "After all, it is really the man." They were once earnest and hopeful, but they have lost heart. The difficulties have been too great and they are fainting by the way. They are messengers, but they have no fresh message, torches, but their light has gone out. Why ? Again and again because of some secret sin, because of spiritual sloth, because of some self-indulgence. Or again, how often we see a brother working faithfully and in many ways earnestly, but there is some fault which is marring his work and weakening his influence, and we think, "If only he realised it—if only he could be saved from it!"

How about ourselves? Is there no compromise with sin; do we fear to sin against God? A man is only safe as he fears. Are we growing in grace? Do we know more and more of the abiding presence of Christ? Is Christ more and more to us a living, bright reality? Or must we confess in the silence of our hearts that there is a sad ebb and flow, that our prayers are altogether unworthy, that some sin of evil thought, temper, bitterness, idleness is often overcoming us? Oh! the awful effects of our sin as ministers of God! How they blunt our zeal, how they obscure the image of Christ, how they make our lips dumb for Christ! How they rob us of power to plead and prevail in intercession! Shepherds without the Good Shepherd's love. Ambassadors of Christ, and we cannot speak in His Name. It is so easy to get "set." There is the blindness of youth, so too, of later years. There is the destruction that cometh at the noon-tide.

The years are slipping by, souls are infinitely precious, and the opportunities for witness are so great. What need to advance in grace! What need of better service and new power! Soon we shall see our Lord, and how unfit we are to stand before Him!

What must we do? At the beginning of this new year we must come back again—the man to the Saviour—and at the confessional of Jesus Christ open our griefs, tell our story of sin and failure, and receive again His forgiveness and peace.

I was a sinner, yet I came.

He knew it, too, but spake no word of blame,
Because He loved me so.

And yet more. All that the Saviour can do for a man He will do for us in the days to come. In God's mercy the very failure of the past, which has shown to us our utter insufficiency, may enable us now to learn the completeness of the Gospel. For everyone here the best that Christ can give is waiting, if in faith he will but receive.

THE MAN AND HIS SAVIOUR--II.

By

THE REV. CANON WILLINK, M.A.,

Rector of Birmingham.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.”—JOHN xv. 4-8.

As the basis of our final thoughts together on this solemn day of many inspirations it would, I think, be impossible to find any message more searching or more comforting than these much-loved words of the Master. “The Man and his Saviour” is our subject, and here in our text our dear Lord is speaking to us one by one, just as though we were alone with Him, just as though He were holding our hand in His, and gravely and tenderly speaking to us as some trusted earthly friend might do. And it is in this spirit of a holy intimacy, and yet with a sense of the profoundest reverence, that I would use

this last hallowed moment of our annual gathering that so we may enter yet a little more fully into fellowship with our Saviour, and go back to our work with a deeper love and a new efficiency, because the secret of the Lord is in our hearts, and in our lives that joy of His which is our strength.

Essential Qualifications.

I want to speak to you, and I shall do it as simply as ever I can, of some of the essential qualifications which lie at the very root of all work for God, and this I am sure you will welcome, for I know that the strongest of all the strong ties that have brought us here to-day is our longing to be more faithful to our Ordination vows, and to receive help that may make us more effective in the discharge of our ministry. And I know you will all agree that it is of ourselves rather than of our organisations that we ought to think, because it is so obvious that our effective service is far more often hindered by our personal failure than even by any possible imperfections in our machinery. It is not, of course, that we underrate the value of our organisations—undoubtedly they are most important, and equally without question never before have they been so enthusiastic as they are to-day in their many-sided efforts, almost bewildering in their number, to bring every phase of our complex modern life into closer touch with Christ. For this we must, and we do, rejoice; but we know only too well that even though our methods may be organically perfect, yet if there is a lack of spiritual power behind them, if the man only is in evidence, and not his Saviour also, they are as valueless as some triumph of beautiful machinery would be without the power that can alone give it energy; while if the essential qualifications are there, then even the most difficult of human problems and the most depressing conditions of

parochial and personal equipment cannot hinder the advance of God's cause beyond all human standards of expectation. And here for one moment in passing I want to lay a very strong and comforting emphasis upon this word "essential"—we cannot forget how wonderfully God endows many of His servants, and with what effectiveness and power these gifts of His may be used in His service: we know the priceless value, for example, of that intellectual power and dialectic skill which crowns faithful study and ripened scholarship, and we fully recognise the helpfulness of many another of God's good gifts, such as the power of song or music, skill of hand or strength of body, humour or good-fellowship; but after all, delightful and most valuable as these gifts are—these personal talents entrusted to us—they are not essentials, and there is what I do not hesitate to call a blessed distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials, between the "esse" and the "bene esse" of our service; for if our power and our efficiency depended upon the possession of qualities out of the reach of all but the gifted few, then many of our names would have to be ruled out from the list of God's workers. But, thank God! none need despair, for even if we lack the non-essentials, the things that are really essential are within the reach of every one of God's children, humble and poorly equipped as we may be, and if only the hand of faith and prayer and love grasps them, if by Divine grace the man really keeps in touch with his Saviour, then His strength is made perfect in our weakness, and we shall be "vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Personal Knowledge.

First, then, of these essentials I would name "Personal knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." You all are familiar with the lines commencing "Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me a living bright

reality." There we learn, and surely our own experience has long ago taught us, that knowing Jesus is a very different thing from knowing about Him, and that while head-knowledge and all it implies is most valuable, heart-knowledge is just vitally important. "Abide in Me and I in you"—it is only as the full meaning of these words is realised that we can do any effective work; it is only as the man and his Saviour are in closest contact that the electric current of His power passes into us, and the tender beauty of His light shines out upon a darkened world. "Without Me ye can do nothing," says Christ, and we have long ago learned the truth of His words, for if we are honest with ourselves—and surely on a day like this that is what we are all trying to be—must we not trace home the poor results of some of our service to-day to the sad fact that we have not always kept this essential truth clearly in view, and have acted as though it were a counsel of perfection, and as though it were enough to say to others, "Behold the Lamb of God!" when to our own souls the vision of His love and of His sacrifice has been obscured by the earth-born clouds of our negligences and ignorances? It is not so that God is glorified that souls are won or lives built up:

Thy heart must first be filled if thou another's soul
would reach;
It needs the overflow of heart to give the lips full
speech.

But if we do "know Him and the power of His resurrection," if we abide in Him and He in us, then we shall be "changed into the same image from glory to glory," and we shall have the joy of "showing ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed," and this is what all our hearts are longing for.

Surrendered Life.

A second great essential is that our life must be a Surrendered life. God cannot use us for highest service otherwise—He has His plan and His purpose for us, and they must be the best possible, for infinite Power, directed by infinite Wisdom and inspired by infinite Love, can make no mistake; and one great secret of effective service lies in our loyal acceptance of them: our duty is just to be “willing in the day of His power,” and to recognise, as by the use of many different similes He repeatedly asks us to do, our own position before Him. We must recognise that we are of the household of God, and that to each one is appointed our special sphere of service under the direction of the Head of the House; that there God stands as Master of the vineyard, assigning to each labourer as He will his section of the work; that He is the Captain of our salvation, Who gives commands to His soldiers, which at the risk of utter defeat they must be prepared implicitly to obey. And this is surely what the Collect for this week so beautifully teaches us, when in time-hallowed words we pray that we “may both perceive and know what things we ought to do, and may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.”

Does He ask us to work in some dingy, depressing slum parish, face to face with all the problems of poverty and ignorance? Has He set us down in some remote country parish, isolated and unknown, and far from the stimulus of human interests and activities, or is He calling us to work in the Mission-field, among the un-Evangelised millions of His children? Surely one of the noblest and most privileged calls that can reach any man! Is it at home or abroad, in town or country? Is it active service or quiet study that He needs of us? Is it health and strength, or is it His will that we should learn how true it is that “they also serve who only stand and wait”?

How little, after all, it matters if only we know it to be the Master's will for us, and in the blessed strength of that knowledge find power to lay our lives "at His feet" and give Him of our very best "as to the Lord and not unto men"!

Willing and Free.

And a third point is here: essential as this complete surrender is, it must, if it is to be perfect, be Willing and Free. Christ cannot accept forced service. Wonderfully was He Himself a surrendered Man, and perfect indeed was His willing and free service! From the moment when in the unknown realms of time and space He rose from His Father's Throne to do His will, complete surrender and willing service ever mark His Incarnate Life. They shine through His first recorded words uttered in His Father's House; as the Gospel reminded us on Sunday morning last; they grow clearer and ever clearer as the Life is lived Whose very meat it was to do the will of God: they inspire the unknown agonies of the Garden of Gethsemane; and on the Cross of Calvary they explain the dying Saviour's sigh of thankfulness that at long last, through a perfect Life and an all-atoning Death, the will of His Father, cost what it might, had been accomplished. And this same obedience, willing and glad and free, that our Lord rendered to His Father, He asks of us; here as in all else He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Sometimes, as we well know, such surrender seems a hard-sounding and difficult thing, and as we think of all that lies behind it, of sacrifice and self-discipline, we wonder how we can face it, and we ask ourselves, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and then another great essential comes into view, and we learn in one of Milton's majestic lines the wonderful master-thought that explains all the mysteries of human service and surrender:

Freely we serve, because we freely love!

The Secret of Service and Sacrifice.

And we thank God for the knowledge that from St. Paul himself—perhaps the greatest example of all of a strong nature wholly and gladly surrendered to God—down through all the ages of Christ's saintly workers the secret of their service and sacrifice remains unchangeably the same, “The love of Christ constraineth us!” Brothers, what a wonderful thing this love of Christ is! If in earthly matters we recognise every day of our lives the power that love can wield, if we have ourselves known—and many indeed of us have known—the wonder and the strength of a young man's love for the maiden of his choice, or the infinite power of a mother's love for her child, then we have learned, in some degree at least, the secret that transforms service into freedom, and sacrifice into gladness: and it is just here that we need to rise from the human to the Divine. I think that occasionally some of us are a little apt to forget the constant presence of Christ in all the little details of our trivial round of daily duty, and I am perfectly certain it would just make all the difference in the world if we could realise more continually than perhaps is sometimes the case that He is always near to us—just out of sight, it is true, but yet close by, watching every struggle with a Divine sympathy and eagerness, sorrowing over every failure, rejoicing over every victory. What new and marvellous power would come to us if we could always realise that it is He, our blessed Lord Himself, Who, for example, asks us morning by morning to get up early that we may have the fuller time for undisturbed prayer; Who expects us to settle down with promptitude and decision to our morning's work, who loves to see us go forth blithely and eagerly to our afternoon's visiting, and to our many-sided evening duties! What a difference it would mean to us if we always knew that He is there the day through,

waiting and hoping that we will turn to Him constantly in all our difficulties and manifold temptations! We all know only too well how many they are, and how we clergy have a special burden of our own to bear. How hard it is to "suffer fools gladly," to be always bright and sympathetic in the face of worry and over-pressure, to settle down to our reading, to be thorough in all the details of our parochialia! How hard it is not to shirk some obvious but unwelcome duty, to be always in the right frame of mind—devout and reverent—for our numerous services and our frequent sermons and addresses! Yes, it is hard; and if we try to win through just as a matter of duty, just for own sake, and not for His sake, we shall fail, as many have failed before us, inevitably and disastrously—but only let our life be irradiated with the constant recollection that we are ministers and stewards of the Son of God; only let the blessed knowledge come home to us that just behind every duty stands our Lord, that at every tiniest gathering at daily services or in cottage or school-room there He is in the midst of us, sharing in our devotions and rejoicing in our prayers; only let us realise that at every celebration of the Holy Communion He—our Lord and God—is present in very special manner, and that it is to meet Him that we come, and not just to be present at the service—then in the power of an endless love we shall find in His tender message, whispered to our inmost soul, "For My sake, My child, for My sake" the strength to do—to persevere—to give Him at all times the very best we have to give, and the humanly impossible will become the Divinely possible, as we face our life and aim at our high ideal "for Christ's sake"!

A Plea for Spiritual Vision.

And so, my brothers, my plea this afternoon is for spiritual vision and for closer contact between the man and his Saviour. It is no new thought; how can

it be when it is as old as our blessed Lord's Own teaching? But it is the secret of all power in service, and of all joy and peace in believing, and to us who in these solemn days of war long above everything else to serve our country by helping our people to respond to the Call of God, and by teaching them to repent more truly and to live more worthily, this age-long revelation of privilege and power is of unspeakable importance. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels"—of this we are only too conscious; often-times we almost tremble to think of our limitations and our shortcomings, but "the excellency of the glory" will be there all the while, if only we abide in Him and He in us, if only we continue in His love.

How often have we all felt, when preaching to some great congregation, what the wonder of the result would be if each of our hearers were really moved by the message of God, and went forth to translate it into action in their world of friendship and influence! But when could such thoughts be more in place than on such a day as this, as we think of the splendid potentialities of this our great gathering, all of us men responsible for Christ's work among the many thousands of souls committed to our care? Brothers, may we indeed go back to our homes, far-flung over all England, cheered by our human comradeship and strengthened beyond all telling by some new vision of the Saviour! The past, they tell us, is our sanctuary, the present is our opportunity, and the future is our hope. *Respice finem*—look on to the end of it all, and, realising that God's callings are always God's enabling, let us expect great things from God, let us attempt great things for God, determined, as Ignatius Loyola used to say, to work as though everything depended upon ourselves, and to pray as though everything depended upon God, and then, in union with our Saviour and abiding in Him, we shall indeed glorify our Father by bearing much fruit.

PRESENT AT "ISLINGTON."

Among those present at the Islington Clerical Meeting were the following :

Chairman: Rev. C. J. PROCTER.

CANON ALLEN	REV. A. ASTBURY
REV. W. J. ABBOTT	„ H. D. ATKINSON
„ H. H. ABDY	„ H. W. ATKINSON
„ C. G. ACWORTH	„ G. H. AYERST
„ H. S. ACWORTH	MR. H. ATACK
„ B. W. ADAMS	
„ H. F. S. ADAMS	
„ T. S. ADAMS	
„ B. S. ALDWELL	PREBENDARY BURROUGHS
„ H. O. ALLBROOK	CANON BARNES-LAWRENCE
„ W. G. ALLCOCK	„ BILLETT
„ C. ALLEN	REV. A. L. F. BAKER
„ W. Q. AMER	„ E. J. BAKER
„ C. W. R. J. ANDERSON	„ J. W. BALDING
„ H. R. ANDERSON	„ H. GRASSETT BALDWIN
„ J. A. ANDERSON	„ J. CLIFFORD BANHAM
„ H. A. ANNESLEY	„ C. C. B. BARDSLEY
„ H. S. ANSON	„ E. J. BARDSLEY
„ G. E. ASKER	„ A. J. BARFF
„ G. ASKWORTH	„ H. F. BARFF
„ W. M. ASKWORTH	„ B. BARING-GOULD
„ E. C. ASPINALL	„ F. BATE

REV. W. A. BATHURST	MR. T. L. BATES
„ H. W. CAMPBELL BAUGH	„ G. C. PARKHURST
„ MONTAGU BEAUCHAMP	BAXTER
„ A. J. BELL	„ A. BISHOP
„ E. BELL	„ F. C. BRADING
„ C. H. BELLAMY	„ J. T. BUDD
„ D. D. BENNETT	
„ E. E. BENSON	
„ D. W. BENTLEY	BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD
„ S. E. BENTLEY	CANON CHAPMAN
„ A. L. BICKERSTAFF	„ M. B. COWELL
„ C. F. BICKMORE	REV. E. P. CACHEMAILLE
„ H. C. F. BINGHAM	„ J. F. CAITHNESS
„ H. L. BIRCH	„ J. CALLIS
„ A. BIRKETT	„ E. C. CAMPBELL
„ W. BLEIBEN	„ J. CAMPBELL
„ T. L. BLUETT	„ E. D. S. CAMUS
„ L. BOMFORD	„ S. J. CARLTON
„ E. BOOKER	„ H. J. CARPENTER
„ T. E. BOOTH	„ R. W. CARPENTER
„ F. W. BOTHEROYD	„ W. G. CARPENTER
„ A. BOTTERILL	„ C. LISLE CARR
„ H. E. BOULTBEE	„ L. C. CARR
„ A. A. BOXLEY	„ J. CARTER
„ C. H. BRADBURN	„ W. P. CARTWRIGHT
„ R. F. BRADLEY	„ F. N. CARUS-WILSON
„ W. E. BRADLEY	„ A. W. CARVER
„ W. BRAMSTON	„ C. F. CARVER
„ HUBERT BROOKE	„ T. E. S. CATTERNS
„ T. BROWN	„ E. A. CAUSTON
„ ELMITT R. BROWNE	„ L. J. CAUSTON
„ W. BRYAN-BROWN	„ W. A. CHALLACOMBE
„ C. M. BUCHANAN	„ W. CHAMBERLIN
„ L. G. BUCHANAN	„ F. W. CHAMPNEYS
„ R. W. BUDDEN	„ R. H. CHAPLIN
„ T. BULMAN	„ A. E. CHAPMAN
„ W. P. BUNCOMBE	„ T. C. CHAPMAN
„ E. A. BURR	„ C. H. CHARD
„ R. M. BURTT	„ T. O. CHARTERIS
„ L. B. BUTCHER	„ J. W. CHURCHILL
„ T. R. BUTLER	CHARLES CLARK
„ L. BUXTON	„ J. BAYFIELD CLARK

REV. R. E. CLARKE	REV. J. E. DENHAM
„ E. G. CLOWES	„ H. DENING
„ F. W. COBB	„ F. L. DENMAN
„ W. J. COBURN	„ F. W. DENSHAM
„ R. A. P. COLBORNE	„ G. DENYER
„ A. N. COLLEY	„ VERNON DE SMIDT
„ G. G. COLLINS	„ E. R. P. DEVEREUX
„ E. A. COLVIN	„ P. DEWE
„ S. G. COMPTON	„ F. R. DICKINSON
„ J. CONSTERDINE	„ A. W. DIX
„ A. S. COOK	„ R. A. DOBSON
„ L. W. COOK	„ K. DODDS
„ C. W. COOPER	„ F. E. DOUBLEDAY
„ F. G. COOTE	„ F. VIVIAN DODGSON
„ W. A. CORBETT	„ E. E. DOUDNEY
„ J. E. COWELL	„ H. DOUDNEY
„ W. WETTON COX	„ D. G. DOUGLAS
„ W. A. C. CRAIG	„ J. F. DOUGLAS
„ J. H. CRICKMER	„ DR. A. C. DOWNER
„ W. P. CROMIE	„ R. F. DRURY
„ J. T. CUMMINS	„ J. M. F. DUMPHREYS
„ C. E. CUTLER	„ E. A. DUNN
MR. A. CAMPION	„ E. G. A. DUNN
„ H. CARUS-WILSON	„ C. R. DUPPUY
„ J. C. CROXFORD	„ G. B. DURRANT
MR. EDW. DARBYSHIRE	
„ R. W. DIBBIN	

REV. W. E. DANIELS	PREBENDARY	EARDLEY-
„ J. R. DARBYSHIRE	WILMOT	
„ G. W. DAUBENY	REV. F. S. EARDLEY	
„ W. J. H. DAVIDSON	„ A. J. EASTER	
„ D. T. DAVIES	„ C. H. ECOB	
„ E. DAVIES	„ T. EDDLESTON	
„ W. DAVIES	„ H. G. EDMONDS	
„ WATKIN DAVIES	„ C. J. EDWARDS	
„ W. G. DAVIES	„ J. EDWARDS	
„ G. C. DAW	„ J. ELLIOTT	
„ C. R. DAWES	„ H. V. ELLIS	
„ A. E. DAY	„ W. H. ELWIN	
„ F. L. DE CARTERET		
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